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Ulysses S. Grant. By Franklin Spencer Edmonds. [American crisis biographies, edited by Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, Ph.D.] (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs and Company, 1915. 376 p. \$1.25 net)

Somewhat more than half of this volume is devoted to the civil war, the remainder being divided about equally between the ante bellum and post bellum periods. In the case of one whose title to fame rests so largely upon service as a soldier, much space must necessarily be given to military achievements, but the reader has the right to expect that the story of warfare will be made to illuminate the personality of the subject. This difficult task the present biographer has performed with fair success. The military background is somewhat unevenly handled. The strategy of the Virginia campaigns is not as well treated as that of the western fighting. Physiographic factors are slighted, the influence of the mountains and valleys of western Virginia being scarcely hinted at. Moreover, one looks in vain for helpful comparisons of Grant's strategy with that of his Virginia predecessors and opponents.

In view of the large space given to the four years of war, many readers will regret to find the numerous topics of interest in the following twenty years compressed into paragraphs too concise to give the reader an adequate conception of Grant's share in events. Episodes which have no especial biographical significance, such as the diplomatic settlement with England, are treated even more fully than those which most intimately concern Grant's character and personality, such as his influence against currency inflation and continued military interference in the southern states, and his efforts in behalf of order during the contest over the election of 1876. As to the causes which brought about the numerous cabinet changes, as to the relations of the president to civil service reform, and as to the degree of his responsibility for administrative corruption, the reader is left almost wholly in the dark.

The writer's English is clear and good, and although the style is prosaic the composition is generally praiseworthy. The historical scholarship is adequate and accurate. The reviewer has noticed no serious error. Some opinions are quite debatable, as for instance the judgment that an amicable adjustment of the slavery question was not impossible in 1860 (pp. 91-93). The bibliography shows reliance in the main upon standard secondary works and personal memoirs, some recent publications of the latter class, notably the Grant and Sherman letters and the Welles *Diary*, furnishing the materials for the writer's additions to older biographies.

The portrait presented is not drawn by a hero worshiper. An honest effort to mingle praise and blame in due measure is evident throughout.

The appointment of Washburne as secretary of state (p. 295), the deposition of Sumner from the chairmanship of the senate committee on foreign relations (p. 303), and other errors, are criticised. Yet the portrayal is sympathetic enough. The virtual shielding of Belknap is passed without mention. The extent of Grant's intemperance is not made clear. His responsibility for the corruption which marred his administrations is minimized by the easy assertion that the times were evil, and "it may at least be questioned whether any other could have done much better" (p. 351). The informed reader is likely to feel that a man of different temperament and training might have done much better. Indeed, one might gather from other statements of Mr. Edmonds that such is his own real opinion.

On the whole, however, both critic and general reader will be satisfied with the character portrayed in the book. A simple-minded, honest, patriotic son of the early West; dominated in unusual degree by elemental human virtues — purity, love of family, friends and country; devotion to duty; bull-dog tenacity of purpose; imperturbability; ill-provided by training, experience, and temperament with that shrewd worldly wisdom which was needed to penetrate the disguise worn by the sinister influences which surrounded him in the presidency, yet able to serve in civil office where soldierly qualities availed; and preëminently able to capitalize his powers to the advantage of the country under such a test as the civil war afforded; a character best summed up perhaps in the phrase of Oliver Wendell Holmes: "I doubt if we have had any ideal so completely realized as that of the republican soldier in him" (p. 280).

HOMER C. HOCKETT

The life and letters of John Hay. By William Roscoe Thayer. In two volumes. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1915. 456; 448. \$5.00)

There has been no more interesting American biography in years than this of John Hay, and none has recently made so large an addition to our knowledge of historic facts. Mr. Thayer has brought to his work enthusiasm and literary skill, and he has had the intimate coöperation of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Henry Adams, and others who like them have known both Hay and the inner history of recent years. He has delineated a character with a high degree of artistic success, and has established, we believe, the John Hay of the future. We had long suspected Hay of capacity and vision, but his vivid personality was less known outside the narrow circle of his intimate friends.

John Hay was, all things considered, a man of the last generation and, in the best sense of the word, a political hack. That he had no